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REVIEWS.

Die Amerikaner. Von HUGO MÜNSTERBERG, Professor an der Harvard Universität. Erster Band, "Das politische und wirtschaftliche Leben," pp. xii + 494; Zweiter Band, "Das geistige und sociale Leben," pp. 336. Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler & Sohn, 1904.

THE publication of these volumes is a notable international event. They reinforce the department of literature in which De Tocqueville (*Democracy in America*) and Bryce (*American Commonwealth*) are eminent. Like these previous writers, the present author addresses primarily not an American public, but readers on the other side of the Atlantic. Professor Münsterberg, however, has a task incomparably more complex than that which confronted the French interpreter nearly three-quarters of a century ago, and he plans a much more comprehensive analysis than that which the later British author attempted. At the same time his opportunities to qualify himself for his undertaking have been far ampler than those of either of these predecessors.

To estimate the work fairly one should have thorough knowledge of the "subjective environment" of the Germans with respect to America, as well as complete insight into our own conditions. One should be able to judge the version of American life not by use of any single standard which we may regard as absolute. The work presents a problem of relativity. Considering the state of knowledge about America among the Germans, and their modes of thinking in general, is it calculated to give them more accurate information about us, and means of judging us more correctly? So far as my limited acquaintance with the Germans entitles me to an opinion upon this question, I must answer it without reserve in the affirmative. Professor Münsterberg has not renounced his German citizenship. He does not ask his readers to join him in the worship of strange gods in order to find a bond of sympathy with strange devotees. He does not echo the boasting and bluster which Europeans have too much reason for regarding as basic Yankee traits. Speaking as a German to Germans, he asks his countrymen to apply

their own more general principles of criticism, rather than off-hand superficial forms of comparison, to a people who must be interpreted in the light of antecedents and of surroundings very different from those which furnish the historical setting of continental society.

It is as needless as it would be rash for an American to attempt a forecast in detail of the workings of this argument in Germany. I fancy there will be two principal reactions: first, astonishment that such a brief can be drawn in the interest of America by such a competent authority; and, second, suspicion that "he doth protest too much." If Germans will read the book candidly, however, the resultant can hardly fail to show a preponderance of the former influence.

A somewhat condensed English translation is to appear presently in this country. For that reason it is worth while to consider the book from our own standpoint. How are Americans likely to estimate this analysis of America by a German for the Germans?

In the first place, it may prove somewhat difficult for us to make constant allowance for the fact that it was intended, not for us, but for others. In the second place, there is a schematology about the treatment which will tempt us to put it in the "important-if-true" class. It works out too well as a theory to escape suspicion of being more artificial than real. These two points may be made plainer in a moment.

We have no precise English equivalents for some of the chief terms employed in the analysis, but I shall venture to translate four principal phrases by rather clumsy imitations of the original.

There are four main divisions of the work: Part I, "The Political Life;" Part II, "The Industrial Life;" Part III, "The Intellectual Life;" Part IV, "The Social Life." Each of these phases of American conditions is treated as primarily the expression of a single characteristic and determining principle. This is a genial heuristic and expository device, but it at once presents both of the difficulties just suggested. National life, and above all American life, fits but roughly into any fair framework of philosophical principles. Americans are perhaps more inclined than any other people in our civilization to be skeptical of theories that profess to detect symmetrical architecture and coherent reason underneath the hilterskilter of commonplace human actions. Accordingly there is bound to be a more or less energetic negative reaction when Americans are invited to interpret their politics as the projection of their "spirit of

self-determination" (*Geist der Selbstbestimmung*); their economics as the objectification of their "spirit of self-initiative" (*Geist der Selbstbetätigung*); their intellectual activities as the reflex of their "spirit of self-completion" (*Geist der Selbstvervollkommnung*); and their social life as the output of their "spirit of self-assertion" (*Geist der Selbstbehauptung*). For purposes of bluff we have an exhaustless stock of undigested overratings of ourselves, but when we find a thinker taking us seriously our sense of humor must restrain us from posing as demonstration of these four ample dimensions. We shall want to ask: "Are not other men so?" "Is anything really true of Americans under these rubrics that is not also true of other nations?" "Do the Americans differ from other peoples in the four-squareness of their display of these common principles?" "Is not the whole scheme of interpretation too aprioristic for positive value?"

On the other hand, the author is, in the first place, not to be understood as saying that either of these principles operates exclusively in the division of life for which it is made the test. Each has a certain pre-eminence in that division, while the others, and all minor social forces, fall into a certain subordination to it. This should go without saying, but may be noted in passing. In the second place, the argument is not that these principles are at work in Americans and not in other men. The author rather says to his countrymen: "These principles reach a relatively higher degree of determining influence in these departments of American life than in the corresponding departments of German life. The objective facts of American life can be understood only in their relation to these principles."

I confess that while reading the book I have felt, for my share of Americanism, very much as I suspect President Roosevelt must have felt when he read of himself in Mr. Riis's overweighted eulogy. For our own horizon Professor Münsterberg has too highly idealized America. Among ourselves we could not make out as good a case for ourselves as he presents for us to the Germans. This is not to say that he fails to write judicially, or that he omits reference to necessary qualifications. The proportions and the shading are due to the fact that he is addressing a public in which the worst that can be said of us has had undue currency, and the best has had no adequate representation.

If we can give the book the benefit of these provisos, we shall find it a first-rate help to national self-knowledge. Although it dis-

cusses, in each of the divisions, topics on which we have an abundant literature, and about which all intelligent Americans are supposed to be informed, I wish the two volumes could be published without omissions. There is not a chapter, even if ordinary extracts from the census make up most of the contents, that does not afford some variation of the angle of vision from the one to which we are accustomed.

Of course, it would be easy to cull out from a book covering such a wide field a considerable list of inaccuracies. For example, antedating the movement toward independence from England (Vol. I, p. 70); the literally correct, yet practically insufficient, statement about the liberty of the president in constructing his cabinet (I, 151); the harmless simplification, "\$5,000 und freie Reise," for the emoluments of a Congressman (I, 161); the too liberal rendering of the clause in the fifth amendment to the constitution, relating to second jeopardy of life or limb (I, 185); the vagueness due to omitting the adjective "American" from the sentence (I, 193), "The political existence of the [American] city is entirely dependent upon the state legislature;" the too summary statements about the constitution of our states and cities (I, 196-99); the phrase "ein alter Herr," used as synonymous with the recipient of the bachelor's degree in American colleges (II, 69); the too schematic generalization of the structure of American universities (II, 73); the too sweeping statements about American docents (II, 95 ff.); the statement (II, 194) that "the [American] state knows no such thing as an obligatory civil marriage." It would perhaps be more correct to say that no American state recognizes any marriage as valid except a civil marriage. Since clergymen get their license to solemnize marriages from the state, and simply as clergyman have no such competence except by virtue of the statutes, the proposition will convey to Americans an impression contrary to the facts, although it may not seriously misinform Germans. I have not made special search for slips of this kind, and all that I have noticed are very minute flies in the ointment.

Then there are numerous cases of misplaced emphasis in stating facts, or exhibits of only parts of situations. A case in point is this, in the chapter on religion: "Methodism has flourished among the negroes" (II, 199). This is, of course, true, but it suggests that Methodism has not flourished elsewhere. In nearly every instance of this sort the apparent mistake is corrected later, or a hint is given

which shows that the author did not intend what his language seems to mean. Thus the implication of the above statement is partially removed a few pages later (II, 202-3). There is a similar case in connection with the account of our presidential elections (I, 102). Omission of possible contrasts between electoral and popular majorities seems to mar the description. Presently, however (I, 138), the omission is supplied. So with a rather broad generalization about the social standing of atheism (II, 194). The case of Colonel Ingersoll at once came to my mind in qualification. That very case is cited in the next sentence but one. Such slight blurs are unavoidable when so many details are to be brought into a single picture.

Then reference should be made to a class of propositions dogmatically stated as facts, while in reality they represent merely provincial judgments. In this group I would place the assertion (I, 75) that "no single principle of the constitution has been altered during the first century of the nation's existence." Some of us, who do not believe in state sovereignty as a principle, nevertheless agree with its American champions that the history of the United States will not be correctly written until it starts with recognition that our constitution could not have been adopted if rights of primogeniture had not been tacitly conceded to the principle of state sovereignty. But the most characteristic case under this head occurs in the author's treatment of the intellectual life of America. If he had been to the manner born, he could not have given a more delicious tinge of Bostonian local color than in the naïve declaration (II, 1): "America has three capital cities, Washington for its politics, New York for its business, and Boston for its intellect!" No American is likely to challenge Professor Münsterberg's account, in the following paragraphs, of the historical relation of Massachusetts to the Puritan element in Americanism. In my mind's eye, however, are rather lively images of the superb scorn of the Old Dominion, for instance, at the treatment of Puritanism as the only factor in American thought worth noticing. Whatever may have been true in the past, the amiable conceit that Boston retains its relative influence in American life overtakes the gravity of all but the Bostonese. There are Americans of this generation who began to live in Boston, but who later lived larger elsewhere. To assert that America looks to Boston for its intellectual direction is very much like saying that the Atlantic Ocean depends for its water supply on the Charles River.

More prominent than either of these accidents is the dangerously

high light in which all things American are portrayed. Here we touch directly the question of relativity. Is it not necessary to heighten light and shade in order to produce approximately true effects in minds preoccupied by unfavorable ideas? Quite likely. For our own use, however, the picture must be ruthlessly toned down.

"The American newspaper man is a gentleman, upon whose discretion one may rely" (I, 239). "The negro question is the one really black cloud on the horizon of the public life of the American nation" (I, 282). "The American does not value money-getting if it is not the result of his own labor" (I, 338). "'Envy' is the one word that has never occurred in the American's dictionary" (I, 358). "Nowhere in the world are so many books read as in America" (II, 124). [But suppose they are weighed rather than counted!] "Envy and jealousy have no place in the optimistic nature of the American, who always rejoices in another's prosperity" (II, 189). "The American grows up in knowledge of the Bible" (II, 190). "The influence of the ministers in the small towns is profounder than in Germany" (II, 191). "But how seldom is infidelity the motive [for divorce]; it is the democratic spirit of self-determination which demands that a bond shall be dissolved if it no longer accords with free choice. One may almost say that it is a higher individual morality which will no longer tolerate a union that has become essentially unsanctified. American divorce does not impeach the morality of the conjugal relation" (II, 217). "It has been rightly said that the American has no talent for lying, and the European distrust of the word of others affects the Yankee as peculiarly European. . . . Everybody accepts the check of a stranger, and the largest mercantile transactions are closed by verbal agreement or a nod of the head. . . . In Europe a school pupil who lies to the teacher often has his classmates on his side; in America they are always against him" (II, 220, 221). "The American will take no advantage of the weakness or misfortune of others" (II, 247). [This will be encouraging news to our fellow-citizens who had suspected the contrary in the case of trusts!] "The individual, like the nation, has no talent for getting thoroughly angry" (II, 256). "The bluestocking, the unsexed woman who has lost her feminine charm, does not exist among the products of the higher education of women in America" (II, 289). "Wealth alone confers in the New World no social position" (II, 306). "The nation has reached a maturity at which the masses are actually ready to be led by the more competent" (II, 318).

It would be entirely misleading to say that these quotations give a fair idea of the book. They most certainly do not. There is always a context which qualifies them. They merely give an idea of the key in which the argument is pitched. Respect for America, on very high grounds, is the constant theme. The treatment covers a wide

gamut of praise and censure. Because of the particular public addressed, the criticisms are more carefully subdued, and the praises more strongly accentuated, than would be possible in an estimate of America by Americans for Americans.

Finally, such a book must necessarily contain a large element of the individual judgment of the author about open questions. There are hundreds of opinions, expressed or implied, in the work, with any one of which hundreds of Americans might take issue. If this were not the case, the book might better not have been written. It is a distinct public service for a man with Professor Münsterberg's outlook to utter his opinions on public questions. He is not bound to be infallible. It is enough if he is sincere. It is the reader's business to give the opinions their relative weight among all the considerations that he can control. The fact that the opinions in this instance are expressed in terms of direct or indirect comparison with German conditions gives them no finality, of course, but it throws the subject-matter into wider perspective, and often has the effect of broadening the basis of induction. In some respects the most conspicuous case of this type is the treatment of the Monroe Doctrine (I, 49 and 322 ff.) :

The Monroe Doctrine must fall, but it must fall through the will of the *American* people The hour appears near, since the injustice and the perversity of the doctrine are already suspected in wide circles. Opposition to it is brilliantly represented, and if a reaction once sets in among the American people, it usually spreads with irrepressible rapidity (I, 323).

Although I am more nearly in agreement with Professor Münsterberg's appraisal of the Monroe Doctrine, considered as a purely academic question, than with traditional American opinion on the subject, I should be surprised to learn that the "wide circles" referred to include more than two or three Americans in a million. It may be that Americans will some day take the view that the author outlines, and it may be that the day is near; but whatever we may think ought to be the course of events, there are no more signs, as political signs go, that such a change of heart is near at hand, than there are that America, England, and Germany are about to form an offensive and defensive alliance to compel arbitration of international disputes. Very nearly the same thing is to be said of the confident prediction that the western portions of British North America will soon be absorbed by the United States (I, 315 ff.). I have never happened to make the personal acquaintance of an American who seriously

regarded the annexation of any portion of Canada as likely to be, within his lifetime, within the sphere of practical politics. There are Americans with other views of course, and perhaps the present attitude of New England business men toward the subject of Canadian reciprocity is connected with growing opinions about the further possibility; but to the majority of us the subject is at most one for humorous bravado toward our Canadian neighbors, or for purely speculative discussion.

No country needs self-knowledge more than America. I have indicated these inevitable lines of negative criticism of the book, not because the most important things to be said about it are adverse, but because I welcome it as an invaluable addition to our apparatus for self-inspection. Its judgments are so much more flattering, on the whole, than judicial Americans would or could pass upon themselves, that a certain consistency will force them to discount such items as those specified, before they will feel at liberty to take the benefit of its analysis. Having recognized these limitations, I am free to say that the book ought to go into the list that every intelligent American should read. After all, large-minded men will find enough, not only between but in the lines, indicative of our rawness, and our faults, and our dangers, in every department of life, to prove that the author is as discriminating as he is generous.

ALBION W. SMALL.

Histoire de la France contemporaine (1871-1900). Par GABRIEL HANOTAUX. Tome I, "Le gouvernement de M. Thiers." Paris: Combet. Pp. xi + 639; portraits. Fr. 7.50.

M. GABRIEL HANOTAUX, who belongs to the French Academy, has undertaken a contemporary history of France from February, 1871, to the end of 1900. This volume treats of the end of the Franco-German war, with the government of M. Thiers, the negotiations for peace, the Commune, the constitutional crisis, the debates of the National Assembly, and the liberation of the territory. It ends with May 24, 1873.

The author, a diplomatist and formerly minister of foreign affairs, was able by reason of the positions he occupied to obtain unpublished documents on that period of French history. He possessed such documents concerning both the inner and the outer affairs of France. This work is more a political and diplomatic than a general history of France. As it is, it is a most interesting book,